

# THE BEACON PROJECT

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A Transformative Vision for St Mary's Brecon



The Beacon Project is a bold programme of capital development to support mission, ministry, and community involvement at St Mary's Church, Brecon. It will seek to transform our ministry in Brecon and within the new Brecon Ministry Area, while also contributing to the Brecon Beacons National Park's ambition to transform Brecon into **“a place synonymous with inspirational activity, linked to local excellence in the creative arts and the inspiring experience of the landscape setting.”** The Beacon Project will also take advantage of St Mary's heritage and location in the centre of Brecon to offer residents, tourists, and pilgrims a vibrant centre for community support, wellbeing, culture, and the arts.

# CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

“

*And now **faith, hope, and love** abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.*

1 Corinthians 13.13

”

The Beacon Project began last year with an initial consultation process that involved the PCC and congregation in wide-ranging conversations, interviews with local stakeholders, and an analysis of our current capabilities. The discussions sought to answer four questions based on the theological virtues of **faith, hope, and love** that are the substance of our Christian faith.

## How can we be a Beacon of Faith?

- How can St Mary's make best of use of its central place in Brecon to witness to our faith in Christ Jesus and to draw others into that faith? What more can we do to teach the Christian faith and embrace our Anglican identity?

## How can we be a Beacon of Hope?

- How can we be a community that offers the hope of the Resurrection to people in a confusing and anxious world? What more can we do to offer people hope and security?

## How can we be a Beacon of Love?

- How can we demonstrate God's love to Brecon, especially to those most in need? What more can we do to demonstrate God's love?

## What does it mean for St Mary's to be at the heart of Brecon?

- How might St Mary's location be best used to the advantage of Brecon? How might our facilities be used to support local charities and volunteers to ensure that we live in a compassionate and caring town?

I've never before experienced the combination of reverent worship, informality, and warm welcome that I have found at St Mary's.

—a new member

We experienced in your church exactly what we needed...we could sit and recover. No one hurried us. On top of that, we were fascinated to see a Bible teaching group happening...whilst children played in the play house and people chatted.

—a midweek visitor

*What a beautiful church with an outstanding stained glass window. Staff at this establishment were so friendly. Beautiful day so I was able to sit outside and watch the world go by.*

—a TripAdvisor Review

# PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

As a result of our conversations, we are now undertaking a three-pronged plan to achieve our goals within the next five years:



## Serving in Faith, Hope & Love

Develop well-led teams of collaborative ministry based on three central guilds:

**St Luke's Guild:** Responsible for providing pastoral care and support.

**St Martha's Guild:** Responsible for organizing fellowship and hospitality.

**St Eluned's Guild:** Responsible for ensuring excellent worship.

These guilds will also cooperate in reaching out to the Brecon community.

## Creating a Holy Space of Welcome

Although St Mary's Church is a much loved and frequently used building, it needs both an uplift and more areas of flexible space for use by the community and local charities for meetings and other activities.

We are now exploring affordable ways of achieving redevelopment of the interior to create more attractive worship space, a better café experience, and provide office, meeting, and storage space. We intend to do this in ways that are deeply sympathetic to the building's character and heritage.



## Financing our Future

None of our aims is achievable or sustainable without reliable financial support. The costs for keeping the church building open 6.5 days a week, maintaining its fabric, and funding our ministries are high. Obtaining funding and creating new streams of income for new ministries and building work require strategic thinking and long-term planning. But we believe that we can move St Mary's towards financial self-sufficiency, without relying too much on constant fundraising drives, within the next five years.

We are confident that by working together and with friends from across the Brecon community we can achieve these goals and thus become a beacon of faith, hope, and love in the heart of Brecon.

# CREATING A HOLY SPACE OF WELCOME

## Our Guiding Statement

In order to be a beacon of faith, hope, and love in the heart of Brecon, we need a building that supports all that we do. We are therefore undertaking to create a holy space of welcome: a building that remains primarily a church dedicated to the worship of God while also providing flexible space for use by the Tower Café, local organizations, and the ministry area. Our designs will be sympathetic to the building's heritage.

## Our Goal

To refresh the aesthetics and improve the versatility of the St Mary's Church facilities in order to ensure:

- Excellent worship
- An attractive café experience
- Space for meetings and other activities
- Offices for café and church staff
- A secure sacristy
- Expanded storage space
- Sustainable energy supply



## The Process

The 'Beacon's Project Committee' oversees the Project. It consists of ten people drawn from the congregation, café, and local community with a broad range of expertise. It is responsible for developing options, ensuring transparency and good communication, and undertaking widescale consultation for the development of an achievable and affordable project.

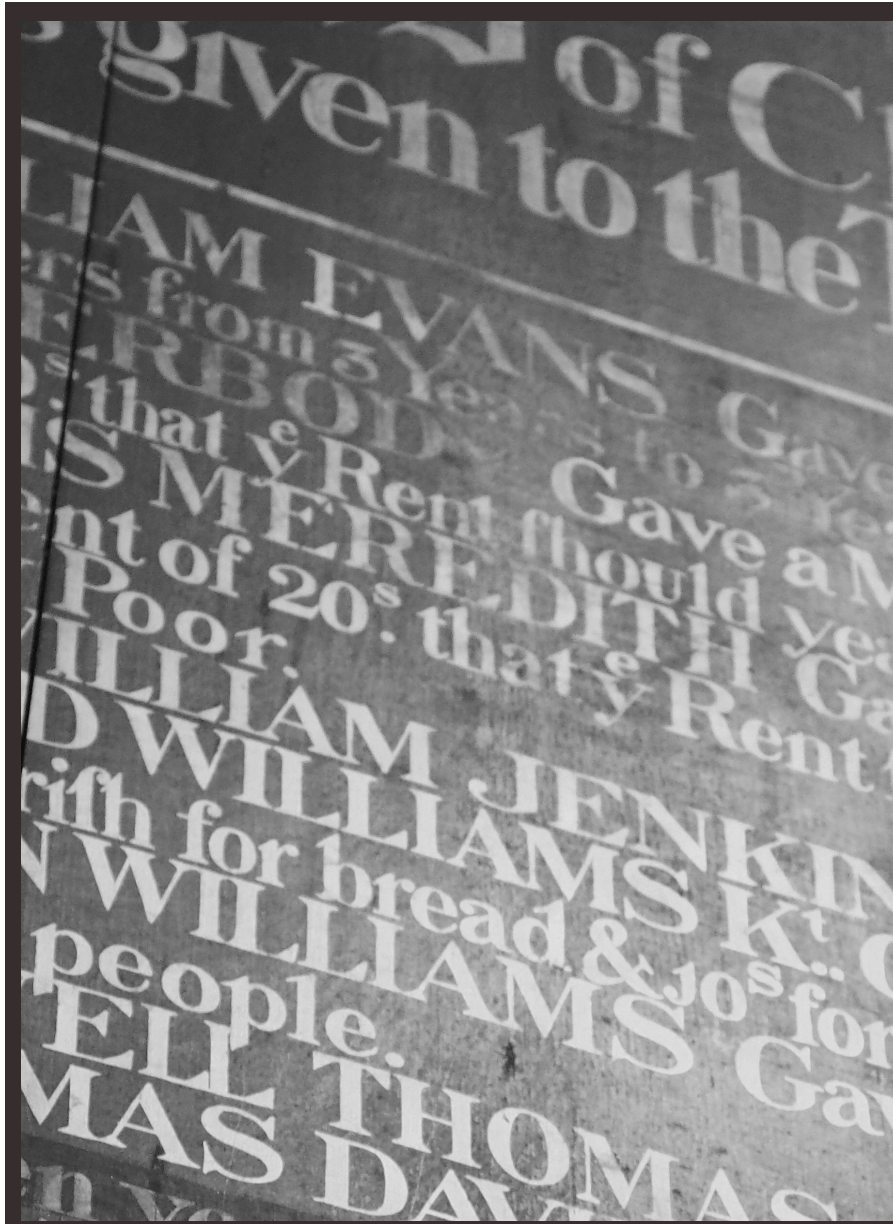
## Funding

The financial basis for The Beacon Project is the income from the sale of Church House. This will be used to kickstart match funding to generate grants from external funders and keep the need for additional fund-raising to an achievable level.

## Delivery

Our intention is to complete a project that meets our needs at an affordable cost within five years.

# FINANCING OUR FUTURE



## Funding

Effective ministry, community engagement, and maintenance of the building require long-term, sustainable funding. The Beacon Project aims to achieve this through improving the income of the Tower Café, attract more

concerts and other events, and explore other streams of income. One of our first goals has been the establishment of a Friends of St Mary's Brecon that will raise funds to maintain the building while also encouraging wider use:

## The Friends of St Mary's Brecon

The Friends is an independent membership charity set up to welcome people of all faiths and none, of all ages and backgrounds, to support the preservation and community use of St Mary's Church.

The Friends objectives are:

- To raise funds to help to preserve and improve the fabric of St Mary's Church, Brecon including the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Buckingham Tower, given its prominent position in the centre of Brecon and the surrounding landscape.
- To encourage and maintain the use of the building (in so far as its primary role is as a place of worship) by the local community. We will reach out to all, and especially those in need, to encourage use of our church as a welcoming and caring environment that works for both social and creative events as well as for religious worship.
- To encourage The Friends to be ambassadors for St Mary's Church, Brecon - promoting its life and work as integral to the wellbeing of Brecon.

“In the town is a mighti great chapel  
(S. Mariae), with a large tour for belles  
of harde ston costely squared with the  
expences of a thousand poundes.”

— John Leland, *King's Antiquary*, 1545

## WHY NOW?

Drawing on earlier plans, the Beacon Project will take advantage of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity presented by the hundredth anniversary of St Mary's as a parish church. The refurbishment and redesign of the interior of the church is long overdue. In recent years, Brecon as a town has received injections of funds to help regenerate and build economic and social cohesion. We believe, as do many others in the town and beyond, that the time is right for St Mary's to play a significant role in positioning Brecon as a "place synonymous with inspirational activity, linked to local excellence in the creative arts and the inspiring experience of the landscape setting". Only St Mary's can offer a combination of ancient heritage, space, and visibility in the heart of Brecon.



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